

## Increasing the Minimum Admission Requirements for Freshmen at Washington's Public Four-year Colleges and Universities

The Higher Education Coordinating Board is proposing new minimum admission requirements for freshmen entering Washington's public four-year colleges and universities, beginning in summer 2008. The board will make a final decision on these requirements after considering public testimony.

### Why the Board is Proposing New Admission Requirements

- **The state's current minimum admission requirements are outmoded.**

The state's minimum admission requirements for freshmen have not been substantially revised in 17 years and are significantly lower than many of the public universities' actual admission requirements. Bringing the state minimum admission requirements more in line with the actual requirements at the public universities would help students better prepare for – and succeed – in college.

- **Too many recent high school graduates are not prepared for college-level work, especially in math.**

Nearly 40 percent of Washington students who go on to a public college or university within a year of high school graduation must enroll in remedial or pre-college classes, primarily in math. Requiring college-bound students in Washington to complete a rigorous high school curriculum would reduce the number of college freshmen who require remedial instruction and increase the number of students who complete their degrees.

### Preparing Students for the Rigor of College

The board is *not* trying to make it harder for students to get into college. Instead it is trying to enhance the prospects for enrolled students to succeed once they enter college.

The board's proposed minimum admissions requirements are the result of extensive collaboration with college and university leaders over the past year and reflect feedback from K-12 education and business leaders. The proposed requirements would affect prospective freshmen entering Washington public four-year colleges and universities, beginning in summer 2008. They would *not* affect transfer students or students applying for admission to Washington's public community/technical colleges or independent colleges and universities.

### Public Hearings

**April 7, 4 - 6 p.m.**

#### **Spokane**

WSU Riverpoint Campus  
535 E. Trent Ave.  
Phase One Bldg.  
Auditorium (SCLS 122)

**April 12, 3 - 5 p.m.**

#### **Des Moines**

Highline Community College  
2400 S. 240<sup>th</sup> St.  
Library Board Room

**April 19, 4 - 6 p.m.**

#### **Ellensburg**

Central Washington University  
400 E. University Way  
Student Union Building  
Yakama Room

**April 25, 4 - 6 p.m.**

#### **Tacoma**

Tacoma Community College  
6501 S. 19<sup>th</sup> St.  
Building 7 - Baker Room

**May 3, 4 - 6 p.m.**

#### **Vancouver**

WSU Vancouver  
14204 NE Salmon Creek Ave.  
Student Services Building  
Rooms SS 129-130

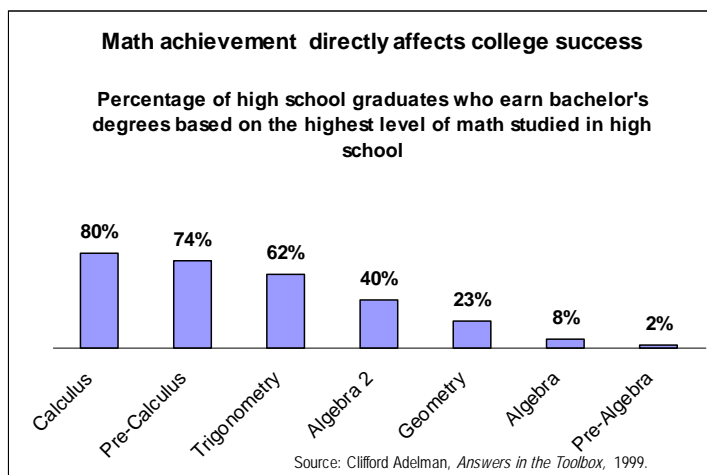
### For More Information

Visit our Web site at [www.hecb.wa.gov](http://www.hecb.wa.gov) to review the draft rules. The board will accept written comments through May 20.

## The Board's Proposed Revisions

- **Requiring four credits of mathematics, with at least one credit in the senior year of high school.**

Currently, students must complete three credits of mathematics in high school – algebra, geometry, and intermediate algebra (or integrated mathematics I, II, and III). The board's proposal would require students to take four math credits, with at least one credit completed in the senior year. Students could earn one math credit by taking an algebra-based science or statistics course. In addition, students who complete pre-calculus before high school graduation would meet the proposed math requirement.



Why? One in three recent high school graduates who enrolls at a state public college or university requires remedial coursework in math. Requiring high school students to complete four credits of math would help them develop the pre-college math skills they need to succeed in college. And national research shows that the level of math a high school student completes is the most important predictor of whether he or she will earn a bachelor's degree.

- **Requiring two credits of laboratory science, one of which is algebra-based.**

Currently, students are required to complete two credits of science, including one year of laboratory science. The board's proposal would require two credits of laboratory science, of which one year would require the student to understand and use algebra. Why? The additional requirements would help students develop stronger scientific reasoning skills and apply their math abilities in a broader academic environment.

- **Requiring three credits of academic core coursework in each year of high school.**

Why? Too many students "coast" through their senior year of high school, causing their skills to erode and increasing the likelihood that they will have to take remedial courses in college. Requiring students to take at least three credits of academic core coursework in all four years of high school would ensure that students continue to remain engaged in rigorous academics through the senior year.

- **Eliminating the statewide college Admissions Index, which ranks students based solely on grade point averages and test scores and does not consider the difficulty of coursework.**

Why? The index's heavy emphasis on grade point averages discourages many students from taking more rigorous courses in high school.

The board is not proposing any changes to the current minimum admission requirements in English, foreign language, social science and the arts. Prospective freshmen would still need to achieve a minimum 2.0 grade point average and submit scores from either the SAT or ACT to be considered for admission.

In addition, the proposed revisions would not affect an important tool that the public four-year colleges and universities currently have to admit students who are "late bloomers" or change their career aspirations midway through high school. Colleges and universities could continue to admit some students – up to 15 percent of each freshman class – who do not meet the minimum requirements but demonstrate college readiness in other ways. And they could continue to adopt additional admission requirements beyond the state minimum admission requirements.